[29th March 1961

within the purview of the Penal Code. I would also request hon. Members to bring it to the notice of the Government whenever they find that there is violation of the law.

Dr. A. SREENIVASAN : Cannot the Publicity Department give a helping hand to the Ministers in these matters?

The Hon. Sri R. VENKATARAMAN : They do. That is what I said before.

Match factories

* 217 Q.—Sri K. M. RAMASAMY GOUNDER (on behalf of Dr. A. CHIDAMBARANATHAN) : Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state—

(a) the number of match factories started in the Lower Bhavani Pilot Project area during 1959–60; and

(b) whether they have been closed and if so, the reasons therefor?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (a) Nil.

(b) Does not arise.

Firewood

10-40 a.m. * 218 Q.—Sri T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Will the Hon the Minister for Home be pleased to state—

(a) whether any representation has been received from the firewood merchants of Hamilton Bridge in Mylapore, Madras, about the rise in prices of firewood and charcoal; and

(b) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken thereon?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Sri T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Sir, are the Government aware that the price of firewood has risen from Rs. 1–14–0 to Rs. 2–8–0 per gundu after the rains in November, and was it brought to the notice of the Government, though not by the firewood merchants but by others, that on account of the inability of the boatmen to ply boats in the Buckingham Canal the price of firewood has risen to such a high figure?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : The statistics which the Government have with them do confirm what the hon. Member mentions about the rising price of firewood. Certainly merchants from Park Town—not from Hamilton Bridge—made representations. They made the suggestion that the railway authorities should be addressed to provide more wagons and also that the Buckingham Canal should be repaired. All this is being looked into.

29th March 1961]

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Sir, are the Government aware that the casuarina plantations from Madras to Sadrus are in the hands of a few people, and they control the prices?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Sir, I would like the hon. Member to make concrete suggestions in this matter. If he would make such suggestions, the Government will have them examined.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Sir, is the Hon. Minister aware of the fact that the tendency of the price is, when once it goes up due to abnormal conditions, not to come down but to remain at that high level only?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : That is unfortunately so. Often times I have seen that this is due to the middlemen rather than the retail dealers.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Are the Government aware that the price of Rs. 2–8–0 per gundu is still higher than the price ruling in November, namely, Rs. 1–14–0? Is there no proposal to bring it down to Rs. 1–14–0?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : We cannot artificially bring it down to Rs. 1–14–0 unless the Government commandeer the entire firewood stock available and bring in wholesale control and take to the course of rationing. But anyhow the Government have been looking into the matter to see what relief they can give to the consumers.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Sir, we were hearing a lot about casuarina plantations to be raised by the Forest Department. May I know, Sir, whether they also bring supplies to the City and also whether their supply has a bearing on the ruling prices in the City?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Yes, Sir. The hon. Member has been hearing a lot about the raising of casuarina plantations. I may tell him that we are planting a lot of casuarina. But still it is hardly adequate to meet the needs of the people. Whenever we take up the question of new plantations, the representatives of the people come to us and say, 'You do not plant here; leave off this place.' That is one handicap which the Government are confronted with.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Is there any proposal to deepen the Buckingham Canal so that boats may ply?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : I want a separate question.

DR. A. SREENIVASAN : Is it possible to produce substitutes for firewood in this State?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Of course, briquettes will be a substitute. But even when the Neiveli project is completed and production of briquettes starts, I am afraid the grow-

ing demands for fuel cannot be met. There will still be shortage and, therefore, we have to concentrate on planting more and more of fuel species in our forests. There is a programme which has been taken up just now, i.e., farm forestry in Block areas. That is a new programme under the Third Plan under which in each Block area waste lands will be taken up for cultivation of fuel species.

Palm jaggery

* 219 *Q.*—VIDWAN T. MUTHUKANNAPPAN (on behalf of DR. A. CHIDAMBARANATHAN) : Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state—

(*a*) the targets of production of palm jaggery by the Jaggery Manufacturing Co-operative Societies for 1959–60; and

(*b*) the quantity of palm jaggery produced during that period?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (*a*) 24.96 lakhs of maunds.

(*b*) 24.44 lakhs of maunds.

VIDWAN T. MUTHUKANNAPPAN : இந்தக் குறைவிற்குக் காரணம் என்னவென்று அறியலாமா ?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : 24·96-லிருந்து 24·44 ஆகியிருக்கிறது. இதில் குறைவெல்லாம் ½ மணங்குதான். இதை ஒரு குறைவாகக் கருதக்கூடாது.

Health cess

* 220 *Q.*—SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Revenue be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government have received any communication from the Central Government asking for its views on the question of levy of Health cess;

(*b*) whether the Government have communicated its views; and

(*c*) if so, what they are?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN (on behalf of the Hon. the Minister for Revenue) : (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Not yet communicated.

(*c*) Does not arise.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : May I know what the view of this Government is with regard to the levy of a health cess?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : That is what exactly has not been communicated and until it is communicated, we cannot give the view of the Government.